

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 308364

NODIS
CHEROKEE

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 23057 ACTION STATE DEC 28.

QUOTE S E C R E T CAIRO 23057

NODIS
CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV JO IS EG XF
SUBJECT: HUSSEIN ROLE IN WEST BANK/GAZA DIALOGUE

REF: (A) STATE 307029, (B) CAIRO 23005

1. EARLIER THIS MONTH, SADAT, IN MULLING OVER HOW
ISMAILIA SUMMIT SHOULD EVOLVE, CONCEPTUALIZED ISRAELI

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EVACUATION OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WITH THESE TWO
AREAS TO BE TURNED OVER TO THE U.N. FOR FIVE YEARS.
AT THE END OF THAT TIME, SELF-DETERMINATION WOULD TAKE
PLACE IN THESE AREAS. DURING THAT FIVE YEAR PERIOD,
THE PRESENT PLO LEADERSHIP WOULD EITHER DISAPPEAR OR
CHANGE AND HUSSEIN COULD ALSO "START HIS PROCESS"
(PARA 6, CAIRO 20501). SADAT DID NOT SPELL OUT WHAT

PROCESS HUSSEIN MIGHT BEGIN, BUT I BELIEVE THAT WHAT HE HAD IN MIND WAS THE CONCEPT OF SOME SORT OF A LINK BETWEEN THE WEST BANK AND JORDAN. AS YOU KNOW, HE HAS FREQUENTLY IN THE PAST SPOKEN ABOUT SUCH A LINK, ALTHOUGH HE HAS SAID THE DETAILS SHOULD BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS.

2. ISMAILIA SUMMIT DID NOT, OF COURSE, EVOLVE AS POSITIVELY AS SADAT HAD HOPED MIGHT BE THE CASE. WHEN HE BRIEFED ME YESTERDAY (REF B), HE AT FIRST SAID NOTHING ABOUT HUSSEIN. AFTER HE HAD FINISHED, I INQUIRED IF HUSSEIN'S ROLE HAD COME UP IN THE TALKS. SADAT RESPONDED IN THE NEGATIVE. NEITHER BEGIN NOR HE HAD TOUCHED ON THE SUBJECT. AFTER REFLECTING FOR A MOMENT, SADAT COMMENTED ON HIS OWN THAT HE HOPES HUSSEIN WILL JOIN HIM IN WORKING WITH THE ISRAELIS TO FIND A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT TO THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. HUSSEIN'S INVOLVEMENT WOULD HAVE A DOUBLE VALUE: (A) HE HAD FOUND ON HIS TRIP TO JERUSALEM THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE READY TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH HUSSEIN, HENCE HUSSEIN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE UPCOMING POLITICAL COMMITTEE TALKS MIGHT "MAKE THE ISRAELIS A LITTLE MORE AT EASE"; (B) HUSSEIN MIGHT HAVE SOME IDEAS THAT WOULD HELP FIND SOME WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT PALESTINIAN IMPASSE. IN SO FAR AS THE PLO IS CONCERNED, IT WAS OF NO IMPORTANCE AT THE MOMENT. HE SAID HE PLANS TO BRIEF HUSSEIN ON WHAT TRANSPIRED IN ISMAILIA TALKS, PROBABLY THROUGH JORDANIAN
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AMBASSADOR.

3. COMMENT: FROM THE ABOVE COMMENTS, AND BASED ON PREVIOUS SADAT COMMENTS ABOUT HUSSEIN, I CONCLUDE THAT HE CONSIDERS HUSSEIN HAS A POTENTIALLY USEFUL, BUT MARGINAL ROLE TO PLAY. FOR HIM, HUSSEIN'S EARLY INVOLVEMENT WOULD (A) REDUCE THE CURRENT IMAGE OF EGYPTIAN ISOLATION AMONG THE CONFRONTATION STATES, (B) PLEASE THE ISRAELIS AND MAKE THEM MORE AMENDABLE (HE HOPES), AND (C) DEMONSTRATE THAT HIS INTEREST CONTINUES TO BE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. AT SAME TIME SADAT WISHES RETAIN FULL MANEUVERABILITY TO WORK OUT PRAGMATICALLY THE KIND OF A SETTLEMENT THAT HE BELIEVES IS NECESSARY. SHOULD HUSSEIN AT ANY TIME AGREE TO PARTICIPATE, SADAT WOULD OPPOSE ANY EFFORT ON THE KING'S PART TO LIMIT HIS OWN FLEXIBILITY. SINCE SADAT IS AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, HE WOULD PROBABLY AT THIS STAGE BE WILLING TO TAKE HUSSEIN'S VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT.

4. SADAT IS ALSO AWARE OF HUSSEIN'S DIFFICULT POSITION AND OF SYRIAN PRESSURE ON THE KING. HE HAS ACCEPTED THE

FACT THAT HUSSEIN CANNOT MOVE TOO QUICKLY, BUT BELIEVES THAT HUSSEIN IS BASICALLY WELL DISPOSED TOWARD HIS EFFORT AND WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE. THERE IS LITTLE HE CAN DO TO STRENGTHEN HUSSEIN VIS-A-VIS THE SYRIANS, HENCE HE RECOGNIZES THAT THE TIMING OF A DECISION TO JOIN IS SOLELY FOR THE KING TO DECIDE.

5. SADAT SUSPECTS THAT HUSSEIN HAS NOT BEEN FULLY CANDID WITH HIM, A JUDGMENT WHICH DOUBTLESS ALSO WORKS THE OTHER WAY. ON HIS PART, SADAT IS RELUCTANT TO BE FULLY CANDID WITH HUSSEIN, SINCE HE BELIEVES THAT WHATEVER HE SAYS WILL AT ONCE BE PASSED ON TO THE SYRIANS. IN MY VIEW, SADAT WOULD RESPOND TO ANY OVERTURES THAT HUSSEIN MIGHT MAKE FOR MORE INTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS, ALTHOUGH I AM
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NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT SADAT WOULD CONVEY HIS INNERMOST THINKING. HE DOES NOT EVEN DO THIS WITH THE SAUDIS, WHO ARE MUCH CLOSER THAN HUSSEIN IS. NEVERTHELESS, SOME GREATER CONTACT SEEMS DESIRABLE. THE SIMPLEST WAY OF ENCOURAGING MORE INTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN SADAT AND HUSSEIN WOULD, IN MY JUDGMENT, BE TO URGE BOTH OF THEM TO DO SO. I WOULD ASSUME THAT THE SYRIANS AND THE REJECTIONIST STATES MIGHT BE DISTURBED AND TRY TO PRESSURE HUSSEIN TO KEEP HIS DISTANCE FROM SADAT. THE ISRAELIS AND SAUDIS WOULD PRESUMABLY WELCOME SUCH CLOSER CONTACT.

6. HUSSEIN'S OPEN PARTICIPATION IN FACE TO FACE NEGOTIATIONS IS DESIRED BY SADAT FOR REASONS ALREADY ADUMBRATED ABOVE. THREE-WAY SECRET CONSULTATIONS WOULD, I BELIEVE, BE EQUALLY AGREEABLE TO SADAT, IF THIS IS HUSSEIN'S PREFERENCE, THOUGH I AM DUBIOUS THAT THEY COULD LONG BE KEPT SECRET. IF HUSSEIN WANTS A ROLE IN THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS, AND I ASSUME HE DOES, HE WILL IN THE END HAVE TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED.

7. OTHER POSTS ARE BETTER ABLE COMMENT ON LIKELY SYRIAN REACTIONS AND PRESSURES ON HUSSEIN THAN WE ARE HERE.

8. DEPT MAY WISH REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO AMMAN, DAMASCUS AND TEL AVIV. EILTS UNQUOTE VANCE

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